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Letter from Metropolitan Anastasius (Gribanovsky): On "Patriarch Alexy's" Address to the ROCOR

Message from Metropolitan Anastasius (Gribanovsky) to Russian Orthodox people regarding "Patriarch Alexy's Address to the Archpastors and Clergy of the so-called Karlovac Orientation" Autumn 1945

The new head of the Russian Church, Patriarch Alexy, "in his pastoral care for those who have severed communion with the Russian Orthodox Church, especially the archpastors and pastors who continue to remain outside her fold," addressed them "once again, and for the last time, with brotherly admonition." He offered them to "repent before the Church for the sin of separation from her and thus return to communion with the Mother Russian Church." The admonition concludes with a threat of ecclesiastical sanctions in the event of refusal by the Overseas Bishops to submit to the authority of the Patriarch.



"How pitifully trivial in comparison are the clever schemes and verbal twists of Metropolitan Sergius, with which he attempts to justify his path of falsehood, a

path to which he wanted to lead the entire Russian Church." - Metropolitan Anastasius (ROCOR)

Being always ready to answer those who inquire about our faith and zealous for "what is good not only before the Lord but also before men"

(2 Corinthians 8:21), we consider it our duty, first and foremost, to declare that both bishops and clergy and laity who have submitted to the jurisdiction of the Hierarchical Synod and Council have never considered themselves to be "outside the fold of the Russian Orthodox Church," for they have never severed the canonical, prayerful, and spiritual unity with their Mother Church. Representatives of the Overseas Church were forced to sever communion only with the Supreme Ecclesiastical Authority in Russia because it had itself deviated from the path of Christ's truth and righteousness and, as a result, was spiritually drifting away from the "Orthodox episcopate of the Russian Church," for which we never cease to offer our prayers during every liturgy, together with the faithful Russian people who have historically remained the "guardians of piety" in Russia.

Even if the visible majority of bishops, clergy, and laity followed its path, this still does not give it the right to be the genuine representative and exponent of the spirit and will of the Russian Church, for the majority of the hierarchs on its side were artificially selected, by choosing like-minded individuals and eliminating those bishops who were not acceptable to it due to their steadfastness and courage, through threats and pressure on the consciences of the most faint-hearted. The clergy followed their bishops obediently, and the people, of course, could not always discern the complex ecclesiastical situation in Russia. On the other hand, it is known that the truth of the Church is not always on the side of the majority, as history testifies to us during the times of Arian, Monophysite, and Iconoclastic heresies. Saints Athanasius the Great and Maximus the Confessor not only remained in the minority compared to the number of heretics but were almost the sole proponents of purely Orthodox church consciousness in their time.

To better understand the relationship of the Overseas branch of the Russian Church to the Mother Church, let's turn to the history of its establishment. It emerged in connection with the mass evacuation of Russian people abroad after the October Revolution of 1917. Severe persecutions by the communist authorities against those who did not accept their Marxist doctrine and especially the fierce persecutions directed at the Church by the Bolsheviks forced many bishops, along with other clergy and part of their flock, to leave their homeland and seek refuge abroad. This movement became particularly spontaneous after the failure of the so-called White Army. When the Russian Church pastors found themselves in foreign lands, led by the eldest hierarch after the Patriarch, Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev, they naturally feared that the numerous Russian exiles could easily assimilate into the surrounding foreign and non-Russian environment and lose their Orthodox and national identity. Therefore, they decided to create, above all, a church center for them, remembering that the Church had always been the main center and builder of Russian national life. The wise directive of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the Holy Synod dated November 20, 1920, outlining the procedure for organizing church governance locally in the event of a rupture of relations with the bodies of the Highest Church Administration in Russia, facilitated this task. Based on it, they established the Higher Church Administration abroad, following the example of what existed in the south of Russia when this region found itself cut off from Moscow during the Civil War.

Established on autonomous principles, the overseas church organization considered itself an organic part of the Russian Church. It made efforts to maintain possible canonical connections with it. This was expressed not only in the fact that the Overseas Church always mentioned the name of His Holiness the Patriarch of All Russia during its liturgical services but also informed him about the course of its life, seeking his guidance in important and perplexing cases. In turn, His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon not only initially expressed any dissatisfaction with the existence of the Overseas Higher Church Administration but also used it to the extent possible as his auxiliary body for conveying his instructions to the most remote Orthodox dioceses from Russia, even delegating part of his authority to it (as was the case when appointing a new ruling bishop for North America). A change in his attitude toward the overseas church organization was felt after the shift in his overall relationship with the Soviet authorities. This change manifested itself in the demand to close the Higher Church Administration abroad following the well-known Genoa Conference. Although it was evident to everyone that this decision was made under pressure from the Soviet government (which has been confirmed in recent times by one of the high-ranking clerics close to the Patriarch who went abroad), the Synod of overseas hierarchs decided to close this body to avoid further complicating its already difficult situation, replacing it with the newly formed Overseas Hierarchical Synod.

There were no objections from the Patriarch regarding the establishment of the Hierarchical Synod. Nor were there any objections from his immediate successor, the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsy, and his deputy, Metropolitan Sergius, during the early years of their administration of the Russian Church. On the contrary, in an unofficial letter addressed to them by the Overseas hierarchs in 1926, he advised them to create, by mutual consent, "their central authority, sufficiently authoritative to resolve all emerging misunderstandings between them," in which he himself declined to act as a judge due to the distance between him and the Overseas Church and his lack of knowledge of the specific conditions of church life abroad. The division between Metropolitan Sergius and the Overseas church governance body only began when he consciously and confidently pursued an agreement with the godless authorities, expressing his new relationship with them in the well-known declaration of June 29, 1927. It is remembered how much confusion this act caused in the hearts of faithful Russian people both in Russia and abroad.



"Renounce your course and your compromises, annul your declaration as an act of your personal error exceeding your authority." - Bishop Damascene to Metropolitan Sergius

The overseas bishops could not accept the views expressed in it because they were clearly contrary to the spirit of the evangelical, apostolic, and paternal teachings and were in deep conflict with the covenants of our Native Church. They found solid support not only in the unanimous negative attitude towards the declaration from their flock but especially in the so-called confessing bishops in Russia who firmly refused to follow the Deputy Guardian of the Patriarchal Throne on the path he had chosen, seeing in it not just an error of the Church leader but a direct sin against the Church.



The Moscow Patriarchate Celebrating Sergius' 80th Anniversary

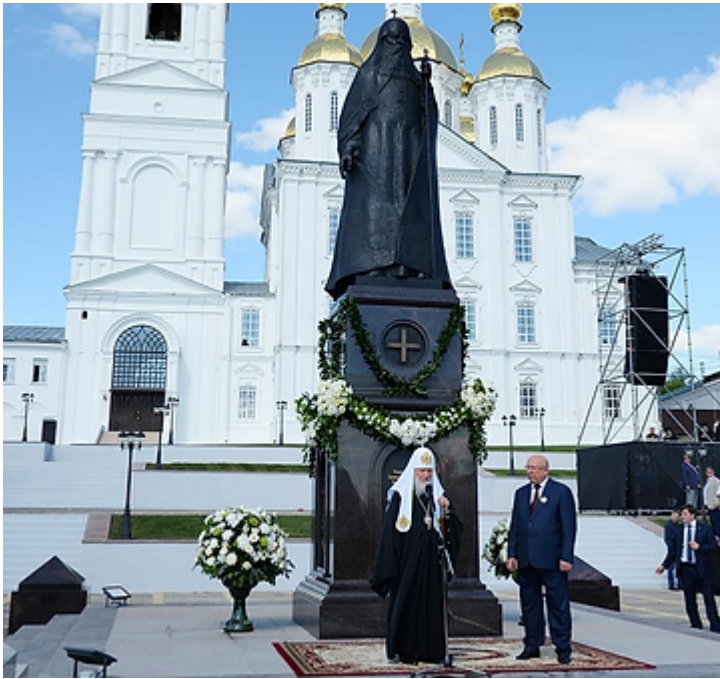
If we, living abroad, are sometimes accused of not knowing the life under oppression there and therefore not having the right to judge our brethren bearing the heavy burden of their service, this cannot be said of these most worthy bishops, deeply respected by all of Orthodox Russia. They lived in the same dangerous and troubled environment as Metropolitan Sergius, endured much more than he did in terms of persecution by the Soviet authorities, went through prisons, labor camps, and remote exiles that were genuinely like death sentences, i.e., as people sentenced to death. Therefore, they were entitled to demand from him the same sacrifices for the Church that they themselves had made. Before us are three remarkable historical documents from this era, in the form of a message from the true pillar and confessor of Orthodoxy, Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, to the equally zealous defender of Church truth, Bishop Damascene of Glukhov, and the letters of the latter and two brothers, Archbishop Pachomius of Chernigov and Bishop Averky, addressed to the Deputy Guardian of the Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Sergius. In them, the content of his declaration is discussed in detail, and an impartial assessment of his new church policy is made, both from a principled and practical point of view, in terms of its expediency.

In the depth of the thoughts expressed in them, infused with the spirit and zeal, in the purity and clarity of their expression of Orthodox worldview, and in the strictness of their style, these remarkable works of our time can almost be placed alongside the Father's creations. Here is what Bishop Damascene writes in his message to Metropolitan Sergius, which received wide circulation not only among his numerous admirers but throughout Russia:

“Your Eminence, do not think that I alone come before you with words of truth. I dare to assure you that the majority of the exiled hierarchs think nearly the same way about the solution to the unbearable situation that you have created. In every city and every village, there is a significant group of the most worthy pastors and laypeople who think quite clearly in the same way. Even the overwhelming majority of other believers secretly sigh about this. We are convinced that even beyond the confines of the Church, the warning voice against its destruction will attract general attention and perhaps make many reconsider their path. The current crucial moment in the history of the Russian Church, if we do not fully appreciate its significance, may end with a severe verdict: ‘The Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing its fruits.’ May your name not be stigmatized by history as one of the extinguishers of the Russian Church’s lamp.

I will not enter into the criticism of your surroundings here, nor will I repeat the protest against the unlawful prohibitions imposed on those who disagree with your course. I will not touch upon the seductive system of awarding honors and titles to your supporters. All of this seems insignificant in the face of the most important task of this moment. It is hard to believe that Your Eminence would persist in your course amid the clearly expressed general indignation. I am one of the lesser hierarchs of the Church, prompted by sincere love for the Church of Christ and for Your Eminence. I dare to earnestly implore you: listen, Master, to the sorrows and groans of the faithful, who come to you from all corners, even from beyond the Arctic Circle, who have not given us peace. Listen to the common voice of the believing people, which is undoubtedly the ‘voice of God.’ Evaluate the negative results of your course soberly; be horrified by the responsibility for extinguishing the flame of faith in the masses brought about by your declaration; think about your responsibility at the Dread Judgment of God. Renounce your course and your compromises, annul your declaration as an act of your personal error exceeding your authority; present yourself as a herald of Eternal Truth and genuine evangelical love before the whole world. Cast aside human machinations and calculations and embark on the path of steadfast confession in the name of Christ. Do not fear the possibility of greater tribulations and trials for the Church (they are inevitable, and your compromises only diminish their significance), for the Church will exult, following in this way to a new Golgotha. Even in her sufferings, she will bless your name, knowing that the primary source of the corrupting principle has been eradicated. But alas, if Your Eminence persists in your course and openly disregards the voice of the Church, then she, continuing her path of the Cross, will renounce you as a co-participant with her crucifiers.”

Another one of his messages on the same topic, addressed directly to the faithful, is also worthy of deep consideration. It seems to sear the reader’s heart with the flames of its severe and unvarnished truth, reminiscent of the language of the ancient prophets. [The] “Great Russian writer Dostoevsky once spoke of Russian monks, ‘They preserve the image of Christ in their seclusion, beautifully and unaltered, in the purity of God’s truth from the earliest Fathers, Apostles, and Martyrs. And when the time comes, they will reveal it to the wavering truth of the world. This is a great idea. From the East, a star will shine.’



"His Holiness Sergius did not compromise on anything that had fundamental significance for the mission of the Church, and his compromise with the authorities extended to an area that the authorities considered important but was not such for the cause of human salvation." - Patriarch Kirill of Moscow

The truth of the world has wavered. Lies have become the law and foundation of human life. Human words have lost all connection to the truth, to the Eternal Word, and have forfeited any right to trust and respect. People have lost faith in one another and have drowned in the sea of insincerity, hypocrisy, and falsehood. But amidst this universal deterioration, surrounded by the stormy sea of untruth, the Church stands unwavering, like a pillar and fortress of Truth. The people who have been estranged and tormented in their deceitful existence have come to know that there is a place where the murky waters of falsehood cannot reach, where there is a throne on which Truth itself establishes its reign and where words resonate not as false, worthless brass, but as pure gold. Is it not because of this that, in recent years, so many

hearts, trembling with faith, have been drawn to the Church, people who were long separated from it by years of indifference and distrust? What will they say? What will they feel when they hear, even from there, from the height of the last refuge of rejected Truth, from the pulpit, words of hypocrisy, man-pleasing, and slander? Will it not appear to them that falsehood has achieved its ultimate victory over the world and that, where for them the Image of Incarnate Truth once shimmered with eternal radiance, there now sneers the repulsive countenance of the Father of Lies? It is either one of two things: either the Church is truly the immaculate and pure Bride of Christ, the kingdom of Truth, and then Truth is the air without which we cannot breathe, or She, like the whole world lying in wickedness, lives in falsehood and untruth. In that case, all is falsehood; every word, every prayer, every sacrament is a lie."

How much tremendous spiritual power, how much confessing boldness, and true wisdom are hidden in these fiery words, in which we hear a kind of apostolic utterance, the voices of the ancient Fathers and teachers of the Church, and our great national confessors of Orthodoxy—Saints Philip and Hermogenes. How pitifully trivial in comparison are the clever schemes and verbal twists of Metropolitan Sergius, with which he attempts to justify his path of falsehood, a path to which he wanted to lead the entire Russian Church. Continuing to develop his arguments based on the old non-Christian principle that “the end justifies the means,” his present-day followers have even gone so far as to blasphemously preach the doctrine of “holy lies” and have invented a special “struggle of falsehood” for the sake of the Church’s salvation. Is it possible to continue to engage in “craftiness and tamper with God’s word” (by inventing excuses for sins)? Have these people truly forgotten who is referred to in the Gospel as the “Father of Lies,” the originator of all falsehood, and any “struggle of falsehood” (if such a struggle exists, for falsehood is almost always the product of feebleness and cowardice that flees from the struggle) can only be carried out in his name and not for the sake of the Church, which resolutely condemns and denies falsehood.

Thus, the Scripture’s word is fulfilled, “lying against the truth.” The primary fault of Metropolitan (and later Patriarch) Sergius in relation to the Church is that he neglected the apostolic covenant to “establish” the Church’s edification “not in the wisdom of men, not in the wisdom of this age and of the rulers of this age, but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:6). Overvaluing the importance of what is “wise and strong in the eyes of men” at the expense of the “weak and unwise of God” (2 Cor. 25-27), he led our Church away from the path of confession bequeathed to her by her Divine Founder, as well as the entire Universal Church. Consequently, he deprived her of the lofty aura she was surrounded with in the eyes of the entire Christian world. The extent of her authority during the persecutions she endured is evident from the following fact.

In 1924, while in London, I was invited to attend a solemn evening service at the famous Cathedral of St. Paul. The vast church (second in size only to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome) was filled with worshipers. At the end of the evening, the dean (the head of the cathedral) invited me to offer his congregation a blessing, preceded by these words: "Now you will receive a blessing from the bishop of the martyred Russian Church, and you will receive it as if it were the blood of Abel sprinkled upon you." Upon these words, the entire congregation knelt. Everyone bowed their heads in reverent silence for a long time after I spoke the words of blessing. I will never forget this sight, which deeply moved my soul. At that moment, I couldn't help but thank God for granting us not only the ability to believe but also the willingness to suffer for Him. The English faithful also participated sincerely in special prayers for the cessation of religious persecution in Russia, which were held in London later by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. G. Lang), and they showed particular respect to Russian bishops everywhere.

Of course, persecution should not be considered a normal state for the Church. Early Christians did not consider it fitting to pray for the end of persecution, just as they did not petition the government for the freedom of their religion, as was outlined in the so-called "apologies." However, they never sacrificed the dignity of the Church to achieve this final goal. They never humbled themselves to flattery before representatives of the pagan government or even before the supreme authorities themselves. Our descendants will feel shame when comparing the language used by today's church leaders in their dealings with those in power with how ancient Christians spoke to Roman emperors and their deputies. They will recall the conversations of St. Philip with Ivan the Terrible or St. Mitrofan with Peter the Great, where they defended divine truth before them and exposed their misuse of the authority granted from above.



Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate Celebrating the
80th Anniversary of Sergius

As the current head of the Russian Church follows the example and teachings of his predecessor in his relations with the Soviet authorities (as he has repeatedly stated in the press) and even goes further in adapting to the spirit of the age, we do not find it possible to enter into canonical communion with him or submit to his authority. We deeply value the peace and unity of the Church and would like to avoid disrupting them in any way. However, there are circumstances in the life of the Church when division becomes morally obligatory and, therefore, inevitable for us, based on the words of her Founder and eternal Head: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34).

Keeping in mind these divine words, St. Gregory the Theologian says that there can be a destructive agreement and a beneficial separation. The separating sword of Christ manifests itself with special strength in times of tense and heightened struggle between truth and error, light and darkness, Christ, and Antichrist, such as we are experiencing today. Love, rightly expressed by one theologian, covers all sins except falsehood and unrighteousness, especially when they invade the Church, which is the “pillar and ground of truth.”

If many foreign bishops and a considerable number of clergy and faithful laypeople remain outside canonical communion with the current ecclesiastical authorities in Russia, they are motivated by not “pride,” which is the mother of all heresies and schisms, but by the voice of their ecclesial consciousness and Orthodox conscience. This voice commands them to obey God more than people. Each of us knows that taking the broad paths, the so-called path of least resistance, is easier than going through the narrow gate. It is not surprising that such paths always attract many, and many could not resist the temptation and entered into agreements with evil, persuading themselves that the present moment demands it for the good of their homeland. But goodness never arises from evil seed. Therefore, we will not follow those who have been ensnared, no matter how difficult our situation may be. For a long time now, “even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place, and labor, working with our own hands” (1 Corinthians 4:11-12). But we do not cease to thank God for having a good conscience before Him and before men, and for Him judging us worthy to remain a free part of the Russian Church.



Cover of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate,
October, 2023.

Our duty is to guard this freedom until we return to the Mother Church the precious pledge she entrusted to us. In an attempt to persuade Russian exiles to abandon their uncompromising stance and the almost unbearable way of life they established in Russia, they are made to believe that times have changed, that persecution of faith has long ceased in Russia, that the authorities now openly support and patronize the Church, and that they are trying to encourage the best national aspirations of the Russian people everywhere. Every sign of improvement in the lives of our suffering brothers in Russia would delight us if we could be sure that it truly exists. Unfortunately, credible reports brought by authoritative church figures and other Church-loving individuals from there during the war, and especially the fact that some who believed

in the promises and insistent calls of the Soviets and hastened to return to their homeland after the war hastily fled from it again, do not allow us to be reassured by this thought. There is no doubt that, yielding to the demand of international public opinion and accommodating the awakened Russian national consciousness, which was so essential for the successful conclusion of the war, the Soviet government decided to change its previous strong negative and hostile attitude towards the Church and grant it and all believers some freedom in the expression of their faith in public. However, the concessions made were too insignificant to compensate for all the harm that the Soviet authorities had caused to the Church in previous years.

Furthermore, these concessions, like everything done under coercion and insincerity, appeared fragile. Many feared that these privileges could be taken away as easily as they were given once the political necessity subsided. But what is particularly sad is that in exchange for the limited freedom it obtained, the Church had to pay a high price – the loss of its internal independence. In gratitude for the trust extended to it, the clergy, from the highest-ranking representatives to the lowest, committed themselves to becoming active collaborators and propagandists of the Soviet government. By aligning its destiny with a government that continually proclaims its godlessness, the Church lost its ability to profess the truth. To please the authorities, even the highest and most responsible hierarchs do not hesitate to spread an obvious falsehood everywhere, claiming that there were never any religious persecutions under Soviet rule, and they even mockingly refer to the host of Russian confessors and martyrs, whom they openly label as political criminals. Lies are always repugnant and detestable. Blessed Augustine said that if the whole world hung by a hair, and that hair was a lie, he would undoubtedly cut that fine thread, preferring the world to perish rather than have any connection with falsehood.

For a minister of the Church, lying is a grave crime. If one who is considered to be a faithful witness of Christ knowingly lies before their conscience, before people, and before God, then they truly become guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, a sin for which Christ the Savior strongly condemned the Pharisees. It's not surprising that the authority of such deceitful shepherds has fallen so low in the eyes of the faithful that they often fear going to them for confession, seeing them as tainted. Unfavorable information about the restricted position of the clergy in Russia is supplemented by the accounts "from abroad" in the form of reports from foreign correspondents who have directly observed Russian church life in Russia.

In the illustrated American magazine *Life* (July 2, 1945), an article titled "Russia Sown Church Elects a Patriarch" was published, along with several photographs depicting Georgi Karpov, the Chairman of the State Council of Church Affairs, representing the government at these festivities. The author provides the following explanation: "Real boss of the Church is an atheist Communist Georgi Karpoff, chairman of the State Council of Church Affairs." Equally significant is the comment by the correspondent in the above-mentioned article, which mentions, "A Communist official, who really governs the Church, gave Patriarch Alexei his blessing." We cannot read these comments by a foreign observer about the current state of the Church in Russia without a deep sense of bitterness. Especially since, despite a somewhat ironic tone, there is no intention to undermine the authority of our Church. Instead, these comments simply reflect the fact that the Church and its leader are in an extremely dependent position on the Communist government.

A similar report can be found in one of the Swiss newspapers, Neue: "The terms 'Soviet Church' and 'Soviet Patriarch' are now common in the Russian language. The dependence of the new head of the Russian Church on the Soviet Government is so real and evident to everyone that it beforehand discredits and deprives of canonical force any prohibitions that the Patriarch may impose on disobedient bishops and clergy. Because under the current conditions of Russian life, they obviously cannot be the result of the free expression of ecclesiastical authority, just as they were not in the case of the earlier prohibitions, which came from the Holy Patriarch Tikhon and even more from Metropolitan Sergius. Not in vain did Russian bishops in North America at the council in Chicago declare the latest prohibitions as unprecedented. Moreover, such penalties would be illegal because they would obviously be imposed on us without hearing personal explanations from each person and without observing other canonical guarantees of justice, as provided for by church rules during the proceedings against bishops and clergy (see Apost. 74, Carf. 28, Kir. — Al. 1, and others)."



Sergius "Did not maintain the necessary dignity of the Church; he bound it to the godless State with such a bond as has deprived it of internal freedom, and at the same time deviated from the righteousness whose upholder the First Hierarch of the Church of Russia has to be. In his Declaration, Metropolitan Sergius on the one hand justified the Soviet regime for its many crimes against the Church" - Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)

Even if the condemnation issued to bishops and priests who did not submit received approval from the heads of other Autocephalous Churches, it still could not impart legal authority. According to the canons of the Church, each Church is authorized to judge only its bishops and clergy and has no right to interfere in the internal affairs of other Churches. The only legitimate judge between the foreign bishops and the current head of the Church could be a freely and lawfully convened All-Russian Church Council, with the participation, as far as possible, of all foreign bishops, especially those currently imprisoned in Russia, for whom we are ready to provide an account of all our actions during our stay abroad. However, such a council is currently impossible under the present circumstances.

Clearly, not being convinced of the legitimacy of his own ecclesiastical prohibitions, Patriarch Alexei is attempting to shift the matter from a canonical to a political context. He is trying to accuse the Overseas Hierarchical Synod (presumably, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia) of giving “ecclesiastical blessing to the historical enemy of Russia – Germany for the defeat and occupation of Russia.” In support of his argument, he refers to a thanksgiving address presented to Adolf Hitler by the Hierarchical Synod in 1938. However, he deliberately omits to mention the circumstances and reasons for presenting this address.

Soon after coming to power, Hitler learned that Russian Orthodox people in Berlin did not have their own church after the church they had constructed was taken away from the congregation due to unpaid debts. This prompted him to immediately allocate substantial funds for the construction of a new Orthodox church on a designated piece of land in the German capital. It’s worth noting that Hitler took this step without any deliberate request from the Russian Orthodox community and without stipulating any conditions that could compensate for it in any way. The Hierarchical Synod, along with all of Russian Diaspora, couldn’t help but appreciate this generous gesture, which coincided with a time when churches in Russia were being ruthlessly closed, destroyed, or converted into entirely unrelated uses (clubs, cinemas, atheistic museums, warehouses for food, etc.). It is also inaccurate for the Patriarch to claim that the “leaders of the ecclesiastical life of the Russian emigration performed public prayers for Hitler.” The Hierarchical Synod never prescribed such prayers and even prohibited them, demanding that Russian people pray only for the salvation of Russia during those times.

One cannot deny the well-known fact that, worn down by the hopelessness of their situation and pushed to the brink of despair by the terror that reigned in Russia, both Russians abroad and within Russia placed their hopes in Hitler, who declared an uncompromising battle against communism. This is the reason behind the mass surrender of Russian armies as the war began. But when it became evident that Hitler was genuinely aiming to conquer Ukraine, Crimea, the Caucasus, and other rich regions of Russia, that he not only held the Russian people in contempt but also sought their destruction, that under his orders our prisoners of war were subjected to starvation, and that the German army, during its retreat, burned and razed Russian cities and villages to the ground, exterminating or deporting their populations, dooming hundreds of thousands of Jews, along with women and children, forcing them to dig their own graves, and when the hearts of all reasonable people turned against him, except for those who “wanted to be deceived.”



Stalin & Sergius

It was then that it became clear to everyone that Hitler not only did not bring a new era of peace, social prosperity, and economic well-being, as he promised in his speeches, but was preparing destruction for himself, his people, and all those who tied their fate to his, which is what happened in reality. This entire affair, founded on a non-religious and purely amoral basis, collapsed with a bang, burying not only Hitler himself but also his closest associates under its

ruins. This ominous lesson is necessary for all of modern humanity to see, that anyone who attempts to build life without God constructs their edifice on sand and dooms it to complete ruin. Through the thunder and tempest of the trials we’ve endured and those that are still ongoing, we can all hear, as it were, a heavenly voice directed to the entire modern world: “Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction... Oh, that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea” (Isaiah 48:10, 18).

In these words, we must seek the key to understanding the destiny of our own homeland. Russian exiles, disconnected from the immediate connection to their native land, have never betrayed it and have not forgotten the heavy fate that befell it. Russian Orthodox hierarchs and pastors, who voluntarily went into exile, did so to remain faithful to the sacred covenants of our history, in which our Church played such a vibrant and productive role. For a quarter of a century, sitting by the rivers of Babylon, they always turned their gaze towards their native Zion and lived with the same thoughts, feelings, and hopes as their much-suffering people. They always believed in Russia's great historical mission and unwavering moral strength and upheld this faith among their dispersed flock when they were weakened and fell into despair under the weight of their sorrows and privations. They attentively observed the signs of the times, trying to discern in them the approaching times and terms of the revival of their Motherland.

Now, perhaps, these times have truly drawn near to us. Embellished with the glory of their victories, in which Russian military genius and the inherent valor of our soldiers shone so brightly, reclaiming their heritage, which history had severed from them, and extending their borders to their natural limits, Russia could be a truly blessed and the happiest country in the world if a new order of life were established within it. This order should be based on the rock of our native Orthodox faith and the principles of complete freedom, love, brotherhood, truth, adorned with the high achievements of modern technical, economic, and social culture.

This is what we continue to pray for to the Almighty now, as Russia stands at a new turning point in its history.

Our prayer is as sincere as our love for our homeland. It is expressed in the following words:

“O God, enlighten, instruct, reconcile, and unite us all with Your grace and let Your ineffable presence be revealed, so that they too turn to You with all their hearts and confess Your greatness, power, and glory, which You have always manifested in the destinies of our Great Motherland.”

Metropolitan Anastasius

Chairman of the Hierarchical Synod

Russian Orthodox Church Abroad [1].

[1]. State Archive of the Russian Federation. Fund 6991. Office 1. File 140. Pages 3-13. Typed copy.